Constructive Workers and Politics

Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 15 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1951 TWO ANNAS

HANDLOOM PROBLEM
II
Policy for Handlooms

Several points of a miscellaneous nature have been raised in the article of Shri Mahtab (*vide Harijan*, 2-6-'51). But I shall confine myself only to the important ones. All quotations below are from his article.

1. In the first para of his article, Shri Mahtab is not correct when he says that

> "It is now admitted on all hands that handloom is not inextricably linked up with hand-spinning."

I do not know how he has gathered this impression.

2. At no less than three places Shri Mahtab has shown his disapproval of the self-spinning programme, with somewhat of a taunt. I have not been able to appreciate its relevancy to the main subject of the article. Mere deprecation of self-spinning is not enough. There is ample literature on the subject. It should be studied and the flaws, if any, in the reasoning which led Gandhiji and the A.I.S.A. to emphasize it, should be pointed out.

3. Shri Mahtab says:

> "There are about twenty-five *lakhs* of handlooms in India and the number of handloom weavers is about 58,10,000. There is no doubt that if yarn is made available more handlooms can be brought into operation."

One handloom can safely be taken to support a family of at least five members. Taking into consideration, "more handlooms can be brought into operation", this industry can be a means of livelihood for about a crore and half of the population of India. The question is whether or not this industry should have an abiding place in the economy of the country, and the occupation permanently secured to the handloom weavers and whether circumstances should not be brought about whereby its goods can be easily sold and whether or not the mill weaving, admittedly its enemy, should be controlled in favour of this valuable cottage industry. Let the Government declare its policy in this respect in unmistakable terms. If that policy is favourable to the handloom, and is earnestly pursued, the various difficulties arising now and then will be easily resolved.

4.

> "The countries which used to consume Indian handloom cloth have practically banned its import in order to help their weavers. If yarn is not available in India, they might import it from other countries, but they are out to help their own weavers."

Has this not a lesson for India? Our yarn is being increasingly exported when the handloom is starving.

5. Again:

> "The consumer must agree to pay the price and reconcile himself to the less attractive finish."

As a matter of fact the prices are soaring high and inferior stuff is in the market. The consumer is putting up with these disadvantages. The question of cheapness and dearness in terms of money is a matter of wider economics and has been answered many a time. It applies to all cottage industries. The question is whether they are to be therefore abandoned.

6.

> "If mills are to be called upon to limit their weaving, the question of retrenchment of labour has to be borne in mind."

This contention equally applies to all other large-scale industries which compete with the cottage industries producing similar articles. On the one hand there is the problem of retrenching a small number of factory labourers in the city, and on the other, that of the unemployment or under-employment of millions of village workmen. Let the Government decide it once for all. Really speaking it should not be difficult to provide some other work for the small number of factory labourers. In the particular case of the weaving industry a very small number in the weaving department may have to be retrenched, but many of them will find a job at the handloom.

7. *Power-loom*: Is power-loom not a miniature mill except that it is a decentralized unit of production? One power-loom, if efficiently worked, displaces about 8 hand weavers and even if inefficiently worked displaces at least 4. If the number of power-looms grows unrestricted, will it not entail unemployment amongst the handloom weavers? The power-loom competes as much with the handloom as the mill-loom. We find in the market mill-cloth spuriously stamped as power-loom cloth and sold by the merchants at higher rates as there is no control on the power-loom. The Government's policy to encourage the power-loom as well as the handloom is self-contradictory.

8.

> "Why should not organizations like the All India Spinners' Association take up the work of producing yarn by means of large-scale hand-spinning as has

been taken up in Bihar by the *khadi* organization there? The Government cannot undertake this venture for it is not their work."

As a matter of fact the Punjab, the Orissa and the Madras Governments are doing *khadi* production on their own. The Bihar organization referred to has declined to make use of Rs 25,00,000 offered by the Bihar Government for *khadi* production and that Government has decided to do it through its own department. It is not correct to allege that the A.I.S.A. is indifferent to this part of the *khadi* work. It is bringing into existence, encouraging and aiding organizations to produce and sell *khadi* and is gradually transferring its commercial *khadi* work to them. It itself is even now producing the major part of the certified *khadi* in the country. But the most important point to which I invite Shri Mahtab's earnest attention is this: the hand-spun yarn will necessarily be very dear, so also the *khadi* made out of it. How will they be marketed if produced on a scale contemplated by him? He has kindly said that the Governments "can and must render all possible assistance if private individuals or organizations come forward to do the work." This offer, coming as it does from a Central Cabinet Minister in charge of the subject in question, has a significance of its own. Only a few months ago large stocks of *khadi* had accumulated in many of the provinces for want of sale. We had many occasions like this during the past period of the *khadi* movement. The *khadi-walas* of course have been pointing out from time to time what the Governments should or should not do for *khadi*, but with little effect. Now at least let the Government provide a lasting remedy to meet the difficulty of sales if it wants the organizations to produce *khadi* on such a large scale. All *khadi*-lovers are very eager to know the solution Shri Mahtab offers for this.

9\.

"If the thinkers do not apply their minds to this drastic change of circumstances (import of cotton and food grains) it serves no useful purpose by dogmatically repeating well-known theories."

This is no doubt a very important point. But have not luxury articles been unnecessarily imported in huge quantities? Have we even now been able to completely correct this? However, taking the position as it is, are these changed circumstances or the well-known theories to be regarded as a permanent feature of our economy? We take the import referred to above only as a temporary aspect. *Khadi*-lovers do not object to the export of mill-cloth. The question is which cloth should be made available for home consumption and whether the textile mills and the power-looms are to be allowed to compete with the handloom. If the Government pursues a steady policy in favour of the handloom, no blame would attach to it if it has to deflect a little from it occasionally to meet unforeseen difficulties. But the present industrial policy of the Government goes against the cottage industries which are necessary in the interest of the teeming millions of the country.

SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU

HIMALAYAN LESSONS

III

We Decide on Tehri Garhwal

Ever since my pilgrimage three years ago to Uttarkashi and Pratapnagar, my thoughts had turned towards Tehri Garhwal. This time we had gone to Nilkanth simply because we had been unable to get away before the rains set in, and the idea was that the place being so near to Pashulok communications would be easy. But, as a matter of fact, those six miles, most of which were a steep climb through a hot dense forest full of fiercely biting mosquitoes, proved the worst possible communications. Finally we decided to try Chamba-Khal, the highest point on the motor road between Narendranagar and Tehri, and if that did not prove good, to go on to Kaudia. We were kindly given permits by the local authorities for both these places. We arranged to sleep at Swargashram on the night of August 11th, and start off from the road above Lakshman Jhula early the next morning in the Pick-up-Truck.

On the Road Again

We were lucky to get down from Nilkanth during a fine interval. But the rain now set in with a vengeance, and the next morning it was still pouring. Rain or no rain we had got to move on. There was at least a mile and a half between us and the Pick-up-Truck, and inspite of our best efforts to keep ourselves and our luggage dry, everything was well wetted by the time we reached the truck. With the least possible delay we all packed in and set off up the steep winding road to Narendranagar. Rumours had begun to reach us that the road beyond Narendranagar had been breached, but was being repaired. At the Collector's bungalow we learned that the rumour was only too true, and that the breach would not be mended for at least another 24 hours. I bethought myself of Phakot Rest House, which I had noticed 3 years ago when motoring that way. The authorities were good enough to give us a permit for this place, and, after purchasing a sack of charcoal and some vegetables, we proceeded on our way. The rain eased off and we began to feel a bit hopeful. We had had nothing to eat since the early morning, and it was now nearing 2 o'clock. We decided that on getting to our destination, we would not attempt to cook a meal, but would have a hot drink each and wait for a good dinner in the evening, after settling in.

Phakot Rest House

The Rest House now came into sight, situated 50 yards or so down the mountain side from the high road, where there were two or three little wayside shops. All this looked rather promising. The first thing on arrival was to hunt for the *chowkidar*. He was not to be found. As the rain was beginning again, we hurried down with the luggage to the back verandah. We peeped in through the glass windows. In the first room, which was empty, the rain was

dripping down through the middle of the roof, and the floor was all wet. In the second room we could see a pile of old chairs, or rather chair frames, all the seats having long since given way, and one dilapidated iron bed with the wire mattress hanging down in loops. Things did not look so bright. Any way we had got to make the best of it. As soon as the *chowkidar* turned up and opened the house we removed all the old furniture into the front verandah, and spread out our wet luggage. But how to light a fire for our cooking? The fireplace was all broken down and we had only charcoal with us. Dry wood no one could produce. In the midst of our bewilderment Bishan discovered an old piece of tin. In this he hammered some holes and put it in the fireplace. There was our stove! Soon the charcoal was burning, and a feeling of well-being came over us. Luckily the weather was fairly mild, because most of our things were wet, and there was nothing to spread our beddings on but the bare cement floor. The next morning the sun appeared, and joyously we dried up all our clothes and rugs. But the breach held us up for two days and nights, because the shale kept slipping from the mountain slope above, and re-blocking the road everytime it was cleared.

We Live on Hope

We cheered ourselves up with the thought that once we got to Chamba-Khal we should find a good Rest House. What a wonderful thing is Hope! Whether ultimately fulfilled or not, it carries man through all his trials. It is only when hope fails that he is done for. And so we in our little difficulties thrived on our hope. The discovery that, when we at last reached Chamba-Khal after a precarious motor drive, there was no Rest House for us to go to, could make no difference to the fact that Hope had sustained us through the previous days. Indeed, Hope in its sublime form becomes Faith — unshakable faith that, so long as we do our best, whatever happens all will be well in the end, for it is His will.

Chamba-Khal a Bad Job

We had now reached, at Chamba-Khal, an altitude of 5,300 ft., and a cold wet wind was blowing over the pass. There was no Rest House for the simple reason that it had been let out on lease by the Forest Department, but as the Collector had not been informed of this he had given us a permit in all confidence that everything was in order. Chamba-Khal is no town or even village. There are a post office, a tea shop, a school and a few scattered houses. The inhabitants gathered round. Various suggestions were made, and much searching was done. Evening was coming on, and still no vestige of shelter for the night had been found. At last somebody produced the key of a small new building. In this we found one inhabitable room, and a *chulha* for cooking our evening meal. But the room was not big enough to accommodate the whole party with all the luggage, so I said I would sleep in the front seat of the Truck, and Bhawanisingh and Bishan slept together in the back of the truck. The night was wet and windy and we all found ourselves a bit damp in the morning. And with the morning came a new difficulty. Latrines of course were nil, but also there were no trees or bushes to give a scrap of privacy anywhere. In rain and mud I puddled nearly a mile down the Tehri road before finding any nook or corner.

Pashulok MIRA

(To be continued)

SARVA-SEVA SANGH

Resolutions

The following is a summary of some of the important resolutions passed at the meetings of the Sarva-Seva-Sangh held at Shivarampalli from 7th to 11th April '51, during the Sarvodaya Conference:

Resolution 4: The suggestion that instead of observing two different days, 30th January and 12th February, the two should be merged into the former, and the *mela* be held on 30th January was considered, and held to be not acceptable, as each of the days has an importance of its own. 30th January enables people to observe the anniversary locally in every village, while 12th February enables them to observe it collectively in the form of a *mela* at places marked by the ash emersion. If *melas* are held on 30th January, the prominent workers everywhere will be expected to attend them with the result that local programmes will suffer. Moreover, the interval between 30th January and 12th February, known as *Sarvodaya-paksha*, is being increasingly used by workers for going about the villages and propagating the ideal of *Sarvodaya* and to bring about an awakening in the masses. Hence, it was resolved that both the days should be continued to be observed as at present.

Resolution 5: After considering the various suggestions received about the use of *sutanjali* yarn offered at the *Sarvodaya Mela*, the Sangh came to the unanimous decision that inasmuch as the ideas behind *sutanjali* are the restoration of the dignity of labour, and emancipation from money economy, the *sutanjali* collections should be utilized for helping or establishing institutions pledged to live by their own labour with, if necessary, donations in the form of labour. The income from *sutanjalis* all over the country should be deposited with the Sarva-Seva-Sangh earmarked for the aforesaid purpose. The *sutanjali* collected at the Paunar *mela* will be used specifically for the Sevagram Ashram.

Resolution 6: The following resolution of the trustees (*Sanchalak Mandal*) of the Go-seva Sangh passed in their meeting of the 25th March '51 was placed before the meeting and approved:

> "In pursuance of the Resolution No. 2 of 8-7-'50 of the *Sanchalak Mandal* of the Go-seva Sangh, after reviewing the situation fully in the light of the Resolution No. 2 of its *sadharana sabha* (general meeting) of 4-8-'50, this meeting of the *Sanchalak Mandal* of the Go-seva Sangh resolves that the Go-seva Sangh as a separate organization be dissolved and merged henceforth with the Sarva-Seva-Sangh."

(The resolution further lays down directions about the manner in which the accounts etc. of the Go-seva Sangh should be wound up and transferred to the Sarva-Seva-Sangh).

Resolution 10: In pursuance of the Resolution No. 7 of March 6, '51, the meeting considered Shri Kumarappa's scheme for a village-uplift centre and empowered the Executive Committee to incur expenses to the extent of Rs 25,000 to start the work.

Resolution 11: Shri Gopabandhu Chaudhari, Secretary, informed the meeting that the food problem in Orissa might require him to start Satyagraha and enquired whether it would then be proper for him to continue to be the Secretary of the Sangh. It was resolved that office-bearers of the Sangh should resign their positions before taking part in a Satyagraha campaign.

HARIJAN

June 9 1951

CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS AND POLITICS

The reader will see elsewhere in this issue Shri J. C. Kumarappa's article "The Next Move". In reproducing it I apologize to him for having omitted one or two expressions, which appeared to me harsher than necessary. My own attitude as a constructive worker is that while I believe that every citizen — and a constructive worker is a citizen — must take intelligent interest in politics, that is, in the right government of the country, every citizen need not be a member of any political party. And it will do good to constructive work, if constructive workers in general keep themselves aloof from every political party. There might be a few exceptional workers, whose participation in a political party might be unavoidable and for the benefit of constructive work. There might also arise an occasion, when almost all constructive workers might have to plunge into a political movement. This too must be regarded as an exception.

Let us understand the difference between party politics and politics. Individually, there are several Congressmen — even in the several cabinets — who are as earnest believers in the Gandhian constructive programme as any of us, who have given to ourselves the title of constructive workers, including Sjts. Prakasam, Kripalani, Ghosh and other dissidents. But as forming part of a political machine, their individual faiths do not count much. The same might happen in the case of the rival political organization founded by the last mentioned leaders, particularly when there is not much ideological difference between the two.

Hence it is difficult for constructive workers to identify themselves with any particular organization as such. They can decide only on the merits of the individual candidates. It would be a happy thing if either no political party is allowed to run ticketed candidates and every candidate stands on his personal merit, or if the voters get a chance of selecting from a panel of party candidates as explained in detail in a series of articles by me in *Harijan* of 25th April and 2nd May 1948 respectively. But since neither of these suggestions are likely to be accepted, in my opinion, under the present set-up of political parties, constructive workers should not identify themselves with any.

I have been asked by several correspondents to express my opinion on the dissident step of Kripalaniji and company. I think they have taken an honest course. They felt themselves to be in a condition of self-suppression and ineffective political existence. Their discontent was well known. They had neither the freedom of an opposition party nor the satisfaction of working in harmony with the leaders of their own. Their step has been none too hasty.

Wardha, 30-5-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE NEXT MOVE

Over three baneful years have rolled away since Gandhiji pronounced that the "Congress has outlived its use." But a few led by Shri Prakasam, Dr P. C. Ghosh and Acharya Kripalani have now decided to leave that organization with a view to creating a new one to breathe the breath of life into the Nation. What will be the course taken to bring this about is uppermost in the minds of most of us. A convention of the Nation's well-wishers is being called early in June at Patna to consider this question.

Gandhiji had suggested that the Congress should flower into a nation-building constructive organization "to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns" and leave power politics alone. Shall we have the vision to seek his guidance yet? Or shall we still run headlong towards the precipice at our own sweet will and pleasure?

During the British regime even constructive work had a political flavour. The *charkha* itself had its roots in a fight against Manchester. All this has to change. Our efforts should be turned towards village reconstruction based on agrarian life. Village social and economic life should be so moulded as to afford a real base for democratic life. Village life itself should afford a training ground for the nation's service through politics. We need not eschew politics. Our politics should be the handmaiden of economic life and not the boss. Even in the highly industrialized United States of America, Mr Brannan, the U. S. Secretary for Agriculture, states in his report, "we believe that it is to our own nation's interest as well as in the interests of the world's political and economic stability to work for improvement of rural living conditions everywhere and to encourage land-tenure policies favourable to the democratic ideals of human justice and dignity of the individual." In our own country, much more so than in the U.S.A., the agrarian reconstruction lies at the base of all our problems.

Nothing much can be done piecemeal. We may organize village industries including *khadi*, we may work for the improvement of rural sanitation and hygiene, we may introduce day-schools and night-schools. All these will be good, but they will have no permanent foundation if the economic condition of the villages, as represented by a sufficiency of food and clothing, is not attained through their efforts. The importing of millions of tons of food-grain does not touch the problem. It is just patch-work. Hence it is imperative that at least now our leaders should turn their attention from power politics to constructive work.

The present Government, with all its pomp and show, has proved to be merely a stop-gap affair. It has initiated no new devices for the betterment of our villages. Where some attempts were made it has only worsened the state of affairs because it lacked the insight into local

problems and attempted to mend matters from a distance. We need a Government in close touch with the life of the villagers and their pressing needs.

Will our leaders, who will foregather at Patna soon, grapple with the situation courageously and single-mindedly, on the lines indicated by Gandhiji and thus retrieve our country from what seems now an inevitable doom?

J. C. KUMARAPPA

MALTREATMENT OF HARIJANS

Shri D. Rangaiyya, Working Secretary of the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, writes:

"A conference of Harijan Adivasis was held on 26-3-1951 at Ganturi, Himachal Pradesh, when they discussed about their educational problems, prohibition work, and so on. The Zamindar of the place — a Mian Rajput by caste — came there followed by about 20 persons with *lathis* in their hands, rebuked the Harijan Adivasis, beat them and caught hold of nine important persons from the audience, tied them up with ropes and confined them in a cattle pound. They were again brutally handled during the night. One of the nine persons escaped and reported the incident to two Congress workers of Nahan. The other 8 persons were in confinement for 3 days. The culminating feature of this episode was that the hair of these confined persons was burnt and injuries were caused to their heads.

"The incident was reported to the Superintendent of Police who deputed a Sergeant for enquiry. As nothing came of it till the first week of April, the matter was again brought to the notice of the police and it is said that the Police Inspector of Nahan was deputed for investigation. The Harijan Adivasis — the Harijans of this area are also Adivasis — are panic-stricken and they fear that nothing may result out of this enquiry. Ganturi is at a distance of 25 miles from the nearest Police Station.

"Shri Dharmadev Shastri, the Secretary of Ashok Ashram, Kalsi, District Dehradun, met the officials of Nahan in this connection on 9-4-'51, who assured him that justice would be done. He arranged to get some writing materials distributed among Harijan boys of Renuka Tahsil and he is intending to start a Harijan Vidyalaya at Ganturi.

"The Mian Rajputs of Himachal Pradesh claim to be the descendents of Rajas, and the other Rajputs of the place are afraid of wearing shoes and carrying umbrellas before them. The Harijan Adivasis dare not wear white clothes, their women cannot wear ornaments; and they cannot even utter "*Ram Ram*" by way of salutation in the presence of Mian Rajputs."

It is earnestly hoped that the Administration of Himachal Pradesh will take a serious view of the incident, and if the complaint is proved, will effectively deal with the culprits. At the same time, our workers should endeavour to create an atmosphere of goodwill between the Harijans and the Zamindars. Let it be understood that wicked as the act of the Rajputs is, they are as ignorant and backward as their victims, and have been brought up for generations in the belief that caste distinctions and privileges are Heaven-made. When we have still learned *pandits* who subscribe to such views, this is not to be wondered at.

Wardha, 30-5-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

NOTES

Vinoba's Tour

I regret *Harijan* has fallen far behind in reporting Vinoba's tour through the Hyderabad State. His important speeches at the Sarvodaya Conference, and the still more important and interesting account of his achievements in the districts of Nalgonda, Telangana, Warangal etc. have yet to be reported. He makes seven halts per week, while *Harijan* is hardly able to give an account of three. As his mission appears to me to be very important, I am unwilling to give quite dry and short notices of his tour, and it is not also possible to give frequently double issues. Other important topics and contributions are also on the waiting list. All these facts explain the delay. I request the patience of the readers.

According to the latest information, Vinoba has by now been able to get donations of more than 6,000 acres of land for distribution to the poor. It is all brought about without the help of law or force. It also shows that mankind has not fallen so low as we are apt to feel in our moments of depression. We must not despair. Mankind is as amenable to the appeal of non-violence, as ever, if made by an apostle of love. God willing, Communist-infested Telangana might well turn into a very successful Sarvodaya area. I understand that the attitude of the Government to Vinoba's mission is helpful and appreciative, but not always so that of Congressmen, who are in some parts quarrelling among themselves by forming rival groups, each trying to undo what the other tries to achieve. This is regrettable.

Wardha, 30-5-'51

"Dadiji" Bajaj

"Dadiji" (Grandma) Birdhibai, mother of the late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj, died at Wardha on the 31st May 1951 at the ripe age of 90. Jamnalalji owed his religious bent of mind, large-heartedness, kind and gentle disposition, philanthropy and love for fellow-beings to her, and developed his inherited traits further to a remarkable degree, so as to embrace people of all castes, creeds and countries in a spirit of equality, even suffering a certain amount of ostracism by his kinsmen.

Gandhiji, while offering her his *pranams* would jovially catch hold of her ears. "You are a bad son," she would say, 'to catch hold of your mother's ears. Now I shall pull your ears;" and she would pull Gandhiji's ears with both her hands. This had become Gandhiji's usual practice whenever he met her, and both enjoyed the fun every time.

She had become almost blind and deaf, but was very fond of spinning, and spent hours on her *charkha* so long as her limbs allowed her these movements. Her yarn must have produced hundreds of yards of *khadi* which she liberally presented to relatives and friends. She was wrapped in her self-spun *sari*, when cremated.

All her sons having long predeceased her, she was looked after by her grandsons. Like a

ripe leaf she has dropped off in the fullness of time. Her death need not be mourned. But Bajajwadi and Gopuri — her usual places of residence — will miss her for a long time, and her loss will be much felt by her two daughters in particular. As to herself she has rested in Peace.

Wardha, 1-6-'51 K. G. M.

Wanted a Botanical Garden at Jodhpur

When shall we have an experimental station at Jodhpur like the one at Sidi Mesri in Tripolitania thus described by Mr Ritchie Calder in *Men against the Desert* (George Allen), p. 76;

" To see the real possibilities of the so-called 'desert' one has to go to Sidi Mesri......It is a 180-acre botanical garden, with an endless variety of trees and plants from all climatically equivalent parts of the world. Here they are tested and adapted to the rigours of the soil and the climate. They are watered by eight wells with tall windmills to do the pumping, and one can see the miracle wrought by water. Ordinary desert sand without treatment even with fertilizers will give large crops of properly selected barley and hundreds of tons per acre of lucerne. Here they have introduced spineless cactus from [America] for animal fodder. From Tunisia they have introduced 'Florence aurore wheat' as an early growing disease-resistant high yielder.... They are trying out various varieties of acacia which lend themselves to natural hedging and to windbreaks. There are great avenues of eucalyptus trees from Australia. There is the casuarina, also from Australia, which, with its whip-like branches and iron-wood, can be an effective brake on the sirocco." Egypt also has an excellent desert research station at Burg el Arab (op. cit. p. 100).

Crops out of the Desert

At the Weizmann Institute (Rehovot, Israel) Mr Calder was shown 'just three trays of sand......There were times when I looked at a vast expanse of sand and thought, " This at least is hopeless." But in those three trays I had the answer. They were all from the same plot — a sand-dune. The first tray contained sand as fine as is used in an egg-timer; the second, a year later, contained lumps — it was becoming soil; in the third tray, at the end of the second year, the lumps were bigger and contained some humus, decomposing vegetable matter; the sand was becoming fertile.

'Now the only treatment this sand had had over 2 years was irrigation with water which included ordinary artificial fertilizer.' (Op. cit. pp.156-7).

Lessons from Cyprus

Mr Calder also tells us how 'in Cyprus malaria has been wiped out by one of the most spectacular health campaigns in history' (op. cit. p. 173).

'Before the war, more than 18,000 cases of malaria a year were recorded at Cyprus. Out of every 1,000 babies, 180 used to die of malaria every year. Today there are no new cases......

'The Great Liberator was Mr Mehmed Aziz, a Cypriot who had worked under Sir Ronald Ross........He organized a staff of 770. He divided the island into six districts, sub-divided into 39 sections, 111 zones and 56 blocks. Every single mosquito-breeding place in every one of these blocks was sprayed with......D. D. T. once every 12 days until there was no trace of the enemy. An island was freed from deadly menace at a cost of £300,000 — just £13 per head of the population.'

In Cyprus again 'trees have been planted — thousands of them. They have been planted round villages, as what are known as " village fuel areas "......In a few years the villagers will, by proper management and cutting, have their fuel and woods as well.

'Trees have been planted on the barren hillsides which were stripped bare and which drained the rains into those torrential gullies through which the soil sweeps to the sea. The trees have been planted to check this erosion.' (op. cit. p. 175).

Guru Govindsinhji's Equations

When Hindu-Muslim tension was at its height, Gandhiji included the following verses in his public prayers:

ईश्वर-अल्ला तेरे नाम ।
मन्दिर मस्जिद तेरे धाम ।
सबको सन्मति दे भगवान् ।

'O God, Ishwar and Allah are Thy names; temples and mosques are equally Thy places of abode. Give to every one of us the right mental attitude so as to be able to understand this.'

So also in an equally critical period of Indian history Guru Govindsinhji wrote:

कर्त्ता करीम सोई ।
राजक रहीम ओई ।
दूसरो न भेद कोई ।
भूल भ्रम मान भो ।

'*Karta* (the Creator) is the same as *Karim*, *Razak* and *Rahim*; There is no difference between them.

देहरा मसीत सोई ।
पूजा नमाज ओई ।

'Temple and mosque are one and the same thing; so are *puja* (Hindu worship) and *namaz* (Muslim prayer).

अल्ला अभेख सोई ।
पुरान ओ कुरान ओई ।

'Allah and Abhekh are one; so are the Puranas (Hindu Scriptures) and the Kuran.'

For these quotations I am indebted to Sardar Sardulsingh Caveeshar, the author of *The Sikh Studies*.

V. G. D.

HIGHER VALUES

In Britain the son of the Defence Minister, Mr Emanuel Shinwell, was ordered on Tuesday to pay a fine of £560 by next Monday or to go to jail for three months. He was convicted for spending more money on farm renovations than is allowed under British law and an application for additional time in which to pay was dismissed by the magistrates. Here is a moral which those who run may read. If the tone of British public life is high it is because British public opinion expects and exacts a high standard of rectitude from ministers and officials. In India unfortunately the contrary is the case, and not seldom office is regarded as a sure shield for nepotism and a general disbursement of favours — to relatives and friends. The practice of winning friends and influencing people has been raised to a fine art in some circles. Here is a new version of the old principle of philanthropy and ten per cent. Only when public opinion bestirs itself and refuses to accept one standard of conduct for private individuals and another for the ministerial and official world will public life in this country be purged of its present dross. Today the more materialistic a politician is the louder his invocation of spiritual values. Too many whited sepulchres stalk beneath white caps.

(Reproduced from *The Times of India*, 25-5-'51)

A MESSAGE TO THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

The Natal Indian Blind Society had a meeting at the Gandhi Hall on April 18, in honour of the blind and deaf authoress and lecturer, Dr Hellen Keller. In the course of her heart-stirring speech, Hellen Keller said :

"I have reasons for my pleasure in being with you this evening, because I have many Indian friends and their severe philosophy has been like a pilot star in my voyage through the silent dark. Of course I have a great admiration for Gandhiji and all he stands for and somehow I feel his presence, though unseen, as I speak to you. I have experienced his Passive Resistance principles. If we struggle uselessly against blindness or any other misfortune or succumb to it, our defeat is sure. Steered purposefully and intelligently, we need not be debarred by outside circumstances. So you see it is not the resistance of God's will, but rather a confidence in Him. 'Over the by-ways we must traverse to reach the hilltops of blessedness.' Gandhiji said 'Everybody admits the sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to the sacrifice of others.'"

Speaking about the blind and deaf, Dr Keller said,

"I try to help my blind and deaf friends who have fallen in a deep loneliness. Surely they are not to be sacrificed because they lack a sense or two. Their education is just as sacred as your own. Thousands in other parts of the world, when given the opportunity, have proved themselves worthy of it. It will gratify me if you can help the movement of the handicapped. You will enable them to feel the power of soul with which God has endowed them and you will help them so that their self-reliance and independence are respected. Through your goodwill they will earn the daily bread and life's sweet satisfaction. Remember, that 'the light that thou givest to others shall come back to shine upon thee'."

ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI

(A DIARY OF VINOBA'S ITINERARY)

X

March 27, Dichapalli (Twentieth Halt, 11 miles)

On our way to Dichapalli we were shown the places where a week ago, the Communists had shot down two constables. The area was said to be affected, but *kisans* had gathered in large numbers with their *Bhajan Mandalis*. They came from long distances, and were eager to touch Vinoba's feet. But he dislikes and disallows it. Under the groves of beautiful guava trees, the villagers gathered to listen to Vinobaji. There was a continuous influx of villagers. They were offered *ambil* (अंबिल) — a simple drink made of local grain — by the local people. Vinobaji in his post-prayer speech referred to his visit to the Dichapalli Leprosy Hospital fifteen years ago. Leper service did not form part of Gandhiji's constructive programme till then. But it had attracted the attention of Gandhiji and Vinoba. The Christian missionaries had been rendering most valuable service in this field throughout the country. But the majority of the patients consisted of non-Christians such as Muslims, Hindus and others. It was felt that social workers from among Indians should come forward to take up this work. Shri Manohar Diwan, one of Vinobaji's colleagues, decided to dedicate himself to this work. Though not a doctor himself, he took the necessary training and started work at Dattapur near Wardha. He had been doing the work all alone for the last 12 years. Recently, a few doctors have come to help him in his mission.

"But there is a great lack of workers," said Vinobaji, "and this lack of workers has become a great obstacle in our work. It was, as it were, we had good crops, but there were not sufficient hands to reap them." The hospital of Dichapalli was, said Vinoba, like a *guru* in that connection. It was a disgrace to Indians that the English people should have to come all the distance to India for rendering service, which we ought to perform ourselves. It was not leprosy alone which needed workers. There were several other items also, such as prohibition, poverty, cleanliness etc. Vinoba warned that the Congress would perish if Congressmen did not engage themselves in such services. Mere legislation would not succeed, said he. It should be reinforced with social propaganda, education and private effort.

He exhorted the people to begin to think in terms of their villages. They were for years accustomed to think only in terms of their families. "Let the good and the virtuous among the villagers form a Samaj of themselves. He would call it Sajjan Samaj, possessing no rights or powers, and yet rendering service."

Did not the wicked people in the village form their associations and act unitedly ? But the virtuous preferred to act individually thereby depriving their virtues of the strength of full self-expression. Unfolding the strength generated by the full self-expression of social virtues was one of the objects of the Sarvodaya Samaj. Every village needed a Samaj, which would think of dealing with the evils in the villages. It would be the duty of the Samaj to give their thought to all the problems of their village. He hoped that such a Samaj would soon come into existence at Dichapalli.

March 28, Kalvaral (Twenty-first Halt, 12 miles)

It was heavily cloudy at Kalvaral, but villagers from the surrounding villages had begun to gather since the morning. Vinobaji advised the people to form Sanitation Corps, Education Corps, and Protection Corps; the last suggestion being made with a view to eliminate from the minds of the people, the fear of the Communists. Some people had left the village through their fear. The Police then came to protect the villagers. Such a protection involved complications and was not free from the fear of police atrocities on some villagers alleged to be either Communists or *gundas*. If the villagers pledged, said Vinoba, that they would live like brothers and unitedly

face any outside aggression, the police would not get a chance to meddle with the affairs of the village.

As a storm was apprehended, the villagers hurried to their homes as soon as prayer was over. There was a severe hail-storm at night. We found next morning as we walked to Kamareddi, that the whole path was filled with green leaves fallen from mango and other trees. Green mangoes had also fallen in thousands. The rains had damaged an area of about fifty miles surrounding the village. Vinoba had caught cold due to exposure.

March 29, Kamareddi (22nd Halt, 12 miles)

At Kamareddi, the clouds had gathered since the morning, but the villagers, in spite of the losses in their fields, had gathered to see the messenger of peace and fraternity. To them, it was he alone, the man of Gandhi, who could give them some consolation. For not less than four continuous hours women from Kamareddi and several other surrounding villages, kept on visiting the place of Vinobaji's abode. Madalasabehn and Mahadevibehn took the occasion to demonstrate *punai* (sliver-making) and spinning. In the evening it was feared that any time the meeting might be disturbed by a storm, but fortunately it was not.

Vinobaji had to unveil Gandhiji's portrait at Kamareddi. He said, he was doing the job with considerable hesitation in his mind. "The sentiments exhibited today may not last long," he feared. "I have seen in many a place that the pictures of great men have become but shelters for mosquitoes. It was therefore better to go without portraits. Like the river the sentiments behind the unveiling of the portrait must increase with time, but experience showed that they weakened and decreased unless maintained and accelerated by successive efforts as in a game of foot-ball. It is necessary to maintain the effect by adding more and more sentiment to the original idea."

People must learn, he said, to contemplate over the qualities of great men. They did not belong to any special class of their own. Every one could make his life equally sublime through his honest efforts. Of what avail was a portrait of Gandhiji with a *charkha*, if the instrument was not plied in the house where the portrait hung? "It is like the portrait of Vishnu, riding *Garuda* (eagle). We keep the portrait and are not expected to ride the *Garuda*. The *charkha* was certainly not meant for Gandhiji alone."

They had achieved Swaraj under Gandhiji's leadership, but with the advent of Swaraj, they had lost Gandhiji. God wanted to put them to test. They claimed to follow Gandhiji. If they did so, and understood the teachings of Gandhiji evidently they no more needed him; if on the other hand, his teachings had no effect on them, they no more deserved him. Vinoba said he saw nothing but God's mercy, even in removing Gandhiji from amongst them. God wanted that the teachings of Gandhiji should be demonstrated to the world through the people of India. What were his teachings? Non-violence and Love Universal; and non-violence demanded complete freedom for its growth. In the absence of Gandhiji, therefore, they were free to think independently and practise the principle in their life and develop it. It was but natural that they looked at Vinoba and wanted to observe his actions, for he had lived with Gandhiji for long. It was good that they witnessed his actions. Nevertheless they could not escape the responsibility of acting up to his teachings. Hence they should observe one another's actions, and help one another. Thus could *ahimsa* grow.

He referred to the situation in Hyderabad. The people did not abandon fear inspite of the new rule. The evils of drink persisted throughout. Was it Swaraj? The present good Government might have replaced the former tyrannical rule, and that must have brought about a change in the degree of happiness, but did it bring about any qualitative change amongst the people? Did they experience strength and fearlessness in their minds? How could they experience Swaraj otherwise? Not portraits but work brought fearlessness. And whether they had regard for Gandhiji would be known not by their words but by their deeds. Did they really love each other? Did they consider their Harijan brothers as their equals? Were their minds free of Hindu-Muslim differences? Did fear of the police vanish? If they could answer these questions in the affirmative, then alone could they say that they had a regard for Gandhiji and not otherwise.

Vinobaji had, during the prayer, himself recited the Telugu version of the usual *shlokas* of the evening prayer. Gandhiji's whole life was but a diligent practice of the standard of development referred to in these *shlokas*. That standard should be our guide. Let them recite the *shlokas* once a day in the evening prayer, and let all families, friends, and relatives join it. They should meditate on the various essentials of the standard. The standard was good for Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. He wished them to recite these verses daily. "Today I am here. Tomorrow I shall leave this village. The day after, I may leave this world. Men like me may come and go, but the standard of *sthitaprajna* will remain good for ever. Let us forget the individuals and remember the standard to which mankind must attain. It alone can help us. My *pranams* to you all."

The people departed hastily as the storm was imminent. Next day, reports said that roofs had been destroyed, several thousand tiles had broken to pieces, the head of a boy had been broken. It rained only hails for about ten minutes, hails six to eight inches in length and four to six in breadth. The experience was unprecedented, said the oldest among the villagers. Vinobaji was much grieved to hear the reports from men and women who gathered on the roadside to have his *darshan*. Inspite of the calamity, they flocked to the roads, stood silent and offered *pranams*. Vinobaji himself had 101.4°. We tried our best to persuade him to break the journey at Bhiknoor, nine miles from Kamareddi. But he insisted on making 17 miles to reach Ramayampeth. He walked all the distance with only half an hour's halt at Bhiknoor, where the whole village had suffered terrible loss, all their crops having been destroyed by the storm. The former crop also had failed. They knew not what to do.

D. M.

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CONTENTS PAGE

HANDLOOM PROBLEM — II .. Shrikrishnadas Jaju 113
HIMALAYAN LESSONS — III .. Mira 114
SARVA-SEVA SANGH RESOLUTIONS .. 115
CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS AND POLITICS .. K. G. Mashruwala 116
THE NEXT MOVE .. J. C. Kumarappa 116
MALTREATMENT OF HARIJANS .. K. G. Mashruwala 117
HIGHER VALUES .. 119
A MESSAGE TO THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED .. Hellen Keller 119
ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI — X .. D. M. 119
NOTES:
VINOBA'S TOUR .. K. G. M. 117
"DADIJI" BAJAJ .. K. G. M. 117
WANTED A BOTANICAL GARDEN AT JODHPUR .. V. G. D. 118
CROPS OUT OF THE DESERT .. V. G. D. 118
LESSONS FROM CYPRUS .. V. G. D. 118
GURU GOVINDSINHJI'S EQUATIONS .. V. G. D. 118

Subscription Rates — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or $ 2.
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.